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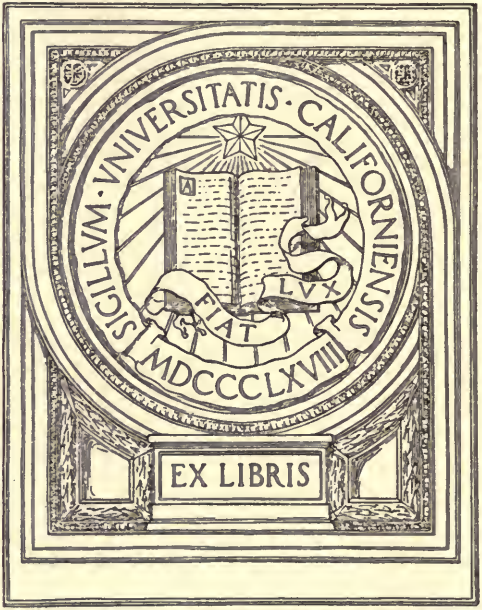

ROBERT ERNEST COWAN

Cowan suppl.

Mrs. W. B. M. Toland

To

Josephine.

1879

LINES

WRITTEN AFTER READING

MRS. M. B. M. TOLAND'S

THREE POEMS, "STELLA," "SIR RAE," AND "IRIS, OR THE ROMANCE OF AN OPAL RING."

BY V. L. F.

MARCH, 1879.

PRESS OF
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"Like a beautiful star seemed Stella last night,
From Heaven she'd floated away,
In her hand was a taper she lit from that light
Ever shining by night and day.

"With the smile of a seraph her immortal love
She sent to her best earthly friend,
With the promise that all the good angels above
Your paths in this life shall attend.

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"And bid me send roses as the flowers that best
Recall to your mind that sweet day,
When her cold hands you crossed on her tawny
breast
As her soul took flight from its clay.

"Then the tears that you shed, turn'd to pearls
on the dead,
So pure did they fall from your eyes,
That the good angels near guarded well ev'ry tear,
And took them with me to the skies."

"I humbly implore,
Sweet spirit, say more!

Oh, tell of that beautiful land,
Its pure crystal streams,
By John seen in dreams,—
Does the great jasper wall still stand?"

"'Tis not for the dead,"
She reverently said,
"To speak of that city afar,
They only can tell
All things will be well,
When entering the gates ajar."

Then quenched was the flame
She lit as she came,

And quickly she vanished away,
As a lesser light
Reveal'd a Scotch knight,
The noble, the constant Sir Rae.

By him "coyly stood,"
With blue tartan snood
Untied from her bonnie fair brow,
His dearest Maidee,
Now a great lady,
Your pen made so worthy his vow.

"We both here were led,"
Sir Rae to me said,

"To ask you a boon that is meet:
When roses you send,
That with them you blend
'The blue bells of Scotland' so sweet.

"For Scotland we claim
The name and the fame
Of the lady we love so well;
She writes of its nooks,
Its crags, and its brooks,
Sure near them she sometimes must dwell.

"So canny she brings
The true Highland rings,

Our mountains and bagpipes seem near,
The pibroch's sweet note
Comes from her fair throat,
Oh list, Maidee, dinna ye hear!"

Just then we all heard
A sweet mocking-bird,
That whistled so strong and so clear,
It startled Sir Rae,
Who hastened away
With Maidee, who left with a tear.

"Oh, bird of the South,
Now open your mouth,

And tell me how came ye so far?"

Birds scarcely can see

To fly round a tree

By light of the moon or a star.

But its little beak

A word could not speak,

It seem'd tho' to whistle and sing:

"I come from the clime

Of the Palm and Pine,

I have seen the bright opal ring.

"As I flew hither

A glowworm's glimmer

Soon guided my wings near a shore,
I paus'd then to rest,
My head on my breast,
And saw Rosmer a boat unmoor.

"'Come Iris, my bride,'
He lovingly cried,
'My sails, see, are ready to fill;
E'er sinks the moon's crest
We'll sail to the west,
For lovers time does not stand still.'

"She came with a bound
At that kindly sound,

And freighted his boat with flowers,
That filled the air
With those perfumes rare
Exhal'd from sweet Southern bowers.

"Again I took flight,
To watch with delight
Where Rosmer and Iris would land;
'Tis here I behold
Their spirits unfold,
As close by your side they now stand.

"We are not too late
Our wishes to state,"

Said Rosmer so modest and true,

Like the wing'd goddess,

Raven-tress'd Iris!

Came swiftly a favor to sue.

"Oh! lady, you know

The South is not slow

To take to her heart a fair friend,

Whose genius so bright

Did gracefully write,

Our homes and our loves to defend.

"We've brought her from groves

Where the birds repose,

And cheerily chirp in the morn,
Magnolias so fair,
No flowers compare
With their fragrance and stately form.

"Then for Iris' sake,
At the day's first break
Send her offerings cull'd with care,
Lest the warm sun's ray
Of the later day
Their freshness and beauty impair."

Then silence profound
Reigned all around,

And suddenly I was alone,
With so much to dread
From spirits just fled,
Their rivalry now to me known.

Lamenting the hour
That spirits had power,
To angels I offered this prayer:
"Oh come to my side,
And quickly decide
These matters that cause me despair."

"We've heard your prayer,"
So whispered the air.

I felt that the angels were near
To guide me aright;
Altho' not in sight,
My soul could but listen to hear:

"The pure loves of earth
Are not without worth,
But earthly their gifts have alloy,
In heaven above
Only souls we love,
And Stella's we've wept o'er with joy.

"'Her gift will impart'
To the Christian heart

Memories to cheer best her friend,
Who winnowed the chaff,
And planted the staff,
That Stella leaned on to the end.

"Take, then, roses sweet,
To place at her feet,
And that message of saintly love.
Earth's spirits beware!
Ye never could dare
To thwart that the angels approve."

The rustling of wings,
Like musical strings,

Touch'd softly and soothingly low,
Brought melody near,
My grieved heart to cheer,
For doubting what gift to bestow.

Then Sir Rae, farewell,
Let Maidee's soft spell
Long lovingly bind her to you;
May the opal ring
Much happiness bring
To Rosmer and Iris. Adieu!

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Mrs. M. B. M.
Toland's three poems.

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